

**COUNTY COUNCIL
OF
HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Bill No. 07-22 As Amended

Introduced by: Council Member Guthrie

Legislative Day No. 07-18 Date: June 5, 2007

AN ACT to repeal and reenact, with amendments, Chapter 62, Alarm Systems, of the Harford County Code, as amended; to establish penalties for the activation of certain types of security alarm systems in certain non-emergency situations; and generally relating to alarm systems.

By the Council, June 5, 2007

Introduced, read first time, ordered posted and public hearing scheduled

on: July 10, 2007

at: 6:00 p.m.

By order: Barbara J. O'Connor, Council Administrator

PUBLIC HEARING

Having been posted and notice of time and place of hearing and title of Bill having been published according to the Charter, a public hearing was held on July 10, 2007, and concluded on July 10, 2007.

Barbara J. O'Connor, Council Administrator

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW. [BRACKETS] indicate matter Deleted from existing law. Underlining indicates language added to Bill by amendment. Language lined through indicates matter stricken out of Bill by amendment.

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1 Section 1. Be It Enacted By The County Council of Harford County, Maryland, that
2 Chapter 62, Alarm Systems, of the Harford County Code, as amended, be and it is
3 hereby, repealed and reenacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

4 Chapter 62. Alarm Systems.

5 Section 62-1. Purpose.

6 The purpose of this Article is to establish standards and regulate the various types of
7 intrusion, hold-up, and other emergency signals from alarm users that require police
8 response or investigation.

9 Section 62-2. Definitions.

10 Unless it is apparent from the context that another meaning is intended, the following
11 terms, phrases, words, and their derivations shall have the meaning given herein. When
12 not inconsistent with the context, words used in the present tense include the future,
13 words used in the plural number include the singular number and words in the singular
14 number include the plural number. The word "shall" is always mandatory and not merely
15 directory.

16 Alarm system -- An assembly of equipment and devices, including, but not limited to,
17 automatic dialing devices, automatic hold-up alarm systems, burglar alarm systems, and
18 hold-up alarm systems, as those terms are defined in this ordinance, arranged to signal the
19 presence of a hazard requiring urgent attention and to which police are expected to
20 respond. This definition does not include alarms on motor vehicles or fire alarm systems.

21 If, however, an alarm system on a motor vehicle is connected with an alarm system on
22 premises, the system is an alarm system as defined in this ordinance. This definition also

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1 does not include alarm systems that are used only to alert or signal persons located within
2 the premises in which the alarm system is located of an attempted unauthorized intrusion
3 or holdup attempt. If such a system, however, employs an audible signal or a flashing
4 light or beacon designed to signal persons outside the premises, such a system shall be
5 subject to the provision of this ordinance.

6 Alarm user -- Any person owning, occupying, or controlling any building or premise, in
7 Harford County, in, on, or at which an alarm system is maintained. For purposes of this
8 ordinance, any tenant, lessee, licensee, or invitee who or which causes an alarm system to
9 be maintained within Harford County shall be deemed to be an alarm user subject to this
10 ordinance.

11 Automatic dialing service -- An alarm system which automatically sends over regular
12 telephone lines, by direct connection or otherwise, a pre-recorded voice message or coded
13 signal indicating the existence of an emergency situation that the alarm system is
14 designated to detect.

15 Automatic holdup alarm system -- An alarm system in which the signal transmission is
16 initiated by the action of the intruder.

17 Burglar alarm system -- An alarm system signaling an entry or attempted entry into the
18 area protected by the system.

19 County -- Harford County, Maryland.

20 Direct connect -- An alarm system which has the capability of transmitting system signals
21 directly to the Sheriff's Office communication center [and/or] OR the Bel Air Barrack of
22 the Maryland State Police.

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1 False alarm -- The activation of an alarm system, to include an automatic dialing device,
2 through mechanical failure, malfunction, improper installation, or the negligence of the
3 owner or lessee of an alarm system or of his employees or agents that results in a
4 response by the Harford County Sheriff's Office. Such terminology does not include, for
5 example, alarms caused by hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, electrical storms or other
6 violent conditions, or an alarm signal activated during the first [sixty (60)] 60 calendar
7 days after an alarm system is installed.

8 Holdup alarm system -- An alarm system signaling a robbery or attempted robbery.

9 Law enforcement agency -- The Harford County Sheriff's Office or any authorized agent
10 thereof, to include the Maryland State Police.

11 [Law enforcement executive -- The Sheriff of Harford County or his designated
12 representatives.]

13 Person -- Any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, company or
14 organization of any kind.

15 Section 62-3. Direct connections to law enforcement agencies.

16 No direct connections shall be permitted in Harford County unless authorized by the
17 Sheriff or the commander of the Bel Air Barrack of the Maryland State Police.

18 Section 62-4. Equipment maintenance.

19 A. Each alarm user, at his expense, is required to maintain all components of his
20 alarm system in good working order at all times to insure that the sensory mechanism
21 used in connection with such device is adjusted to suppress false indications of
22 emergencies. The device shall not be activated by impulses due to short flashes of light,
23 wind noises, vehicular noise or other forces unrelated to genuine alarms.

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1 B. No alarm system designed to transmit emergency messages shall be tested or
2 demonstrated without first notifying the communications center of the Harford County
3 Sheriff's Office [and/or] AND the Maryland State Police, Bel Air Barrack.

4 C. New installations shall be provided with a 60-day grace period before the
5 provisions of Section 62-6 apply.

6 Section 62-5. Excessive false alarm signals.

7 No person shall allow, permit, cause or fail to prevent the emission, for any reason, by
8 any alarm used by him, or any alarm serving a premises or a building occupied and
9 controlled by such person, of more than [three false alarms within any calendar month or
10 more than eight] 2 false alarms within any calendar year. The emission by any alarm
11 system of [either] more than [three false alarms in any calendar month or more than
12 eight] 2 false alarms in any calendar year is deemed to be excessive and constitutes a
13 serious public nuisance, and is subject to service charges set out in the section following.

14 Section 62-6. False alarm service charge; collection.

15 A. For response to excessive false alarms by the Sheriff's Office, the alarm user shall
16 be charged a service fee by the county of [twenty-five dollars (\$25.00)] ~~\$50~~ \$100 for the
17 first alarm in excess of [three] 2 false alarms in any calendar [month] YEAR, [fifty
18 dollars (\$50.00)] ~~\$100~~ \$150 for the second false alarm in excess of [three] 2 in any
19 calendar [month] YEAR, and [seventy-five dollars (\$75.00)] \$ 200 for the third and each
20 successive false alarm in excess of [three] 2 in any calendar [month] YEAR. [The
21 emission of the first and all other false alarms in excess of eight false alarms within any
22 calendar year will be subject to a fee of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) per false
23 alarm.] The Sheriff shall determine whether a false alarm has occurred and the frequency

1 of such false alarms. The alarm user will be notified by the communication section each
2 time an alarm occurs. The County Treasurer or his designee shall notify alarm users of
3 amounts owed to the county and shall make demand therefore, pursuant to the provisions
4 of this section.

5 B. Once notified by the Treasurer's office, the user will have [thirty] 30 days to pay
6 any said service charges.

7 C. False alarm service charges for building owners shall be treated in the same
8 manner as property taxes for enforcement of payments as provided in Section 123-32 of
9 the Harford County Code, as amended. Tenants who have installed alarm systems shall
10 be responsible for false alarm service charges.

11 D. Delinquent false alarm service charges shall bear interest at the same rate per
12 month or any fraction thereof as provided in Section 123-27 of the Harford County Code.
13 Invoices for false alarm service charges are to be paid within [thirty] 30 days of the date
14 rendered and deemed delinquent if not paid. Any administrative costs or legal fees the
15 county incurs in the collection of the fees shall be the responsibility of the alarm user.

16 E. The county may proceed by a suit in a court of competent jurisdiction to collect
17 said charge after demand therefor has been made by the county and the payment thereof
18 refused by the alarm user.

19 Section 62-7. Disbursement of service charges.

20 Service charges will be deposited to the general fund.

21 Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted, that this Act shall take effect 60 calendar days
22 from the date it becomes law.

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EFFECTIVE: September 15, 2007

*The Council Administrator does hereby
certify that fifteen (15) copies of this Bill
are immediately available for distribution
to the public and the press.*

Council Administrator

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HARFORD COUNTY BILL NO. 07-22

Brief Title False Security Alarms

is herewith submitted to the County Council of Harford County for enrollment as being the text as finally passed.

CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT

Barbara J. O'Connor
Council Administrator

Date July 10, 2007

ENROLLED

Billy Bonfante
Council President

Date July 10, 2007

BY THE COUNCIL

Read the third time.

Passed: LSD 07-21

Failed of Passage: _____

By Order

Barbara J. O'Connor
Council Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this 11th day of July, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

Barbara J. O'Connor
Council Administrator



BY THE EXECUTIVE

David R. Craig
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

APPROVED: Date July 17, 2007

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill No. 07-22 As amended having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, becomes law on July 17, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 15, 2007

Barbara J. O'Connor
Barbara J. O'Connor,
Council Administrator

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